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TO RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE 4965  
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RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI IMMEDIATE 5880  
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA IMMEDIATE 1237  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 3103  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE 3414  
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE 6822  
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT IMMEDIATE 1095  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 6482  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY IMMEDIATE 1849  
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA IMMEDIATE 9801  
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE IMMEDIATE 1592  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 0346  
RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR IMMEDIATE 7367  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 7515  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 8583

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 STATE 090247

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/25/2019

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: ACTION REQUEST - CANDIDATES FOR UN HUMAN RIGHTS  
COUNCIL

Classified By: Assistant Secretary for International Organizations  
Esther Brimmer per E.O. 12948 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. This is an action request, please see paragraph 7 and 8.

SUMMARY

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[1](#)2. (C) In May of 2010, the UN General Assembly in New York will elect new members to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). Election to the HRC is done by regional group. There are four open seats for the Asia group and four countries have declared their candidacies: Iran, Maldives, Thailand and Malaysia. Elections are by secret ballot and a country must obtain 97 votes (a majority of the UN General Assembly). If no other Asia Group country enters the field, Iran is virtually assured a seat. Iranian election to and participation in the HRC would further discredit the body and hamper our efforts to make a positive impact at the HRC. It is important that another country from the Asia Group declare its candidacy if we hope to defeat Iran. Action addressees are requested to provide their insights with regard to host country's suitability for membership in the HRC as well as host country's willingness to run (see para 7). Action addresses are based on the Department's initial research on potential candidates. Note additional action request for Embassy Tokyo in para 8. The U.S. would like Japan to actively engage in efforts to find an alternative Asia Group candidate.

END SUMMARY

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BACKGROUND

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[1](#)3. (C) The United States is committed to supporting candidates for election to the UN HRC with a genuine commitment to human rights and opposes candidates with a record of systematic human rights violations. In creating the HRC, UN member states committed to take "into account the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights" (res. 60/251). The United States and like-minded nations have worked together to address our concerns regarding the situation in Iran, including voting in support of UN resolutions condemning the government of Iran's

human rights record. Electing Iran would embolden Ahmadinejad's government, and is tantamount to rewarding its repressive tactics and signaling that the government's continuing human rights violations, including the silencing and imprisonment of opposition members, are of little concern to the world community.

¶4. (C) The United Kingdom has noted its concern with Iran's candidacy in both DC and Geneva. Japan has also noted, to the UK, its concern about Iran's election and it is important that the Japanese, as members of the Asia Group, be engaged in finding an alternative candidate. Finding a fifth candidate as soon as possible is of the utmost importance, as reciprocal voting deals are common in the UN and Iran is likely already securing votes.

¶5. (SBU) The Department will need to determine which country(ies) to encourage actively to run based on your initial assessment of interest and on their predicted ability to win an election in New York. Many possible candidates are not eligible for candidacy as they are already serving on the HRC (see current membership list below), or are ineligible for election as they have served two consecutive terms.

¶6. (U) Current Asia Group members serving on the HRC are: Qatar, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Bahrain, Japan,

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Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Bangladesh, China, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Saudi Arabia. In 2010, India, Indonesia and the Philippines' terms will end, but these countries are not eligible to run again in 2010 as they will have already served two consecutive terms. Qatar's term also ends in 2010 and although Qatar is eligible, we do not believe it intends to run for re-election.

END BACKGROUND

#### ACTION REQUEST

¶7. (U) Department requests Posts to provide their assessment of host country suitability for HRC membership. Factors Post may wish to consider include:

- Capacity: The Human Rights Council meets frequently both informally and formally and member states need to have adequate resources in Geneva or willingness/ability to travel from capital.

- Alignment with the United States on key issues: The Council addresses a wide spectrum of issues including country-specific situations, indigenous issues, economic, social, cultural and political rights, and racism. We are concerned that the Council has increasingly been shifting away from its mandate to address country-specific situations and the United States would appreciate the support of more member states to continue this important country-specific focus. The main exception to the HRC's disinclination to address country-specific situation is its disproportionate, biased focus on Israel. The United States is seeking to move the Council in a more positive direction with regard to Israel.

- Group dynamics: Voting at the HRC is largely done by regional group. We are looking for more countries to join the Council that are willing to be independent from their regional groups at times and are open to exchanging positions and strategy with the U.S. Countries that would be willing to work in their national interest, even if it is not the position of the regional group, would be an asset on the Council.

- Post's assessment if the country would actively compete in an election against Iran, Maldives, Thailand and Malaysia.

18. (SBU) Department requests Posts to demarche at the highest appropriate level, drawing on the points below, as appropriate:

-- Express U.S. concern about the performance of the UN Human Rights Council to date, and our belief that the only way for the Council to change direction and to begin to address the most pressing human rights problems facing the international community is for strong democracies to assume as many seats as possible in the 2010 HRC election. Emphasize importance of strong Asia Group representation on the Council.

-- Note the international recognition and prestige that comes with joining a high-profile body like the HRC, and indicate that a position on the HRC would allow the government to influence the UN's approach toward human rights and signal the government's commitment to engaging with the international community on these critical issues.

-- Determine whether host government would be willing to run for a seat on the Council.

FOR EMBASSY TOKYO  
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- Note that if Iran is elected, it will connote Asia Group approval of its candidacy. Solicit Embassy Tokyo's thoughts on alternative candidates or the likelihood of Iran failing to obtain the requisite 97 votes, and gauge Japan's willingness to actively lobby against Iran.

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POINTS OF CONTACT AND REPORTING DEADLINE  
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19. (U) Posts are requested to report outcome of demarche via front channel cable by no later than September 7, 2009. Posts should use SIPDIS caption in responses. Please contact IO/RHS Colleen Neville with any questions.  
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